

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 03118 281701Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 IO-10

SAB-01 EB-07 ACDA-10 MC-02 AID-05 /097 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8763

INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS LONDON 03118

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, XF, CY

SUBJECT: EXTRACT BRITISH FCO PRESS CONFERENCE RE PRESS
ARTICLE ON U-2 FLIGHTS FROM CYPRUS

REF: JAMES/GARDINER TELCON 28 FEBRUARY

THE FOLLOWING IS EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF TODAY'S FCO NEWS
CONFERENCE: NEWS SPOKESMAN WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON A
PRESS REPORT THAT AMERICAN U-2 AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN OPERAT-
ING FROM THE BRITISH SOVEREIGN BASE OF AKROTIRI IN CYP-
RUS. HE REPLIED (UNATTRIBUTABLY) "SINCE THE CLOSING OF
NICOSIA AIRPORT LAST JULY A NUMBER OF FOREIGN AIRCRAFT
INCLUDING SOME AMERICAN PLANES HAD USED THE AKROTIRI BASE
FROM TIME TO TIME. THERE WERE IN FACT SOME US PERSONNEL
AT AKROTIRI SO THAT THEY COULD HANDLE ANY US AIRCRAFT
WHICH MIGHT COME IN. BRITAIN HAD MADE CERTAIN FACILITIES
IN THE SOVEREIGN BASE AREA AVAILABLE FOR THE US AUTHORI-
TIES IN THE INTERESTS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL
SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM."

ASKED IF THAT MEANT THAT U-2 AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN
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PAGE 02 LONDON 03118 281701Z

USED, SPOKESMAN SAID HE COULD NOT COMMENT ON WHICH TYPES

OF AIRCRAFT THE US AIR FORCE MADE USE.

A CORRESPONDENT ASKED IF THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE USE OF THE BASE BY THE US AIRCRAFT. SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE BASES WERE BRITISH SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. SAID CORRESPONDENTS COULD TAKE IT THAT THE CYPRUS AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN INFORMED.

ASKED IF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES OVER WHICH THE US RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS HAD BEEN MADE HAD ALSO BEEN INFORMED, SPOKESMAN SAID CORRESPONDENTS COULD TAKE IT THAT THE USE OF THE SOVEREIGN BASE AREA HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS. IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION, SPOKESMAN DECLINED TO GIVE ANY DATE WHEN THE US FLIGHTS COMMENCED. (END UNATTRIBUTABLE) SPIERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, AIRCRAFT, PRESS CONFERENCES, MILITARY BASES, MONARCH
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON03118
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750071-0523
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975023/aaaaackv.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 JAMES/GARDINER TELCON 28
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by BrownAM>; APPROVED <29 JAN 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXTRACT BRITISH FCO PRESS CONFERENCE RE PRESS ARTICLE ON U-2 FLIGHTS FROM CYPRUS
TAGS: PINR, XF, CY, FCO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006